

#### 4VAC15-90-530 (New)

#### Game: Deer: Special elk hunting license – random drawing license program

##### **Summary:**

The proposal establishes and outlines the random drawing process for awarding special elk hunting licenses within the Elk Management Zone.

##### **Proposed language of the amendment:**

#### **4VAC15-90-530. Special elk hunting license – random drawing license program**

- A. The annual application period to enter the random drawing for a special elk hunting license shall be the February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 30<sup>th</sup>, both dates inclusive, unless extended by the director. Individuals selected for special elk hunting licenses via the random drawing will be notified by May 30<sup>th</sup> and must be purchased from the department within 30 days of notification.
- B. To enter the random drawing for a special elk hunting license, applicants shall:
  - 1. Complete the application for a special elk hunting license as provided by the Department.
  - 2. Pay a nonrefundable application fee.
  - 3. Apply only once for each random drawing.
- C. Nonresidents shall not comprise more than ten (10) percent, or one drawn applicant, whichever is greater, of all drawn applicants in any application pool for the random drawing license program.
- D. Applicants who physically reside within the Elk Management Zone shall comprise no less than ten (10) percent, or a minimum of one, whichever is greater, of all drawn applicants in any application pool for the random drawing license program.
- E. A special elk hunting license awarded through the Random Drawing License Program shall not be transferable.
- F. Applicants drawn for a special elk hunting license may be rejected if it is determined that the applicant has been convicted of 2 or more wildlife violations, within 3 years prior to the last date of the application period. In determining the applicants' eligibility, the Director shall take into account the nature and severity of the violations.
- G. The Department will award unclaimed special elk hunting licenses to alternates that are drawn during the initial application and draw period in the order that the alternates are drawn.

##### **Rationale:**

The random drawing license program will be the most common means that a special elk hunting license is awarded. This process will provide an opportunity for any individual to draw a special elk hunting license while also prioritizing the opportunity for residents of Virginia and those applicants who reside within the Elk Management Zone. This prioritization of special elk hunting licenses is in accordance with recommendations within the VA Elk Management Plan to balance the benefits that elk provide through hunting opportunities and any potential negative impact from elk within the EMZ. Timelines for random drawing application and awarding of the special elk hunting license will provide sufficient time for an individual to apply and claim their license, if drawn, while also providing enough time for preparation prior to the elk hunting season. The random drawing timeline also provides the opportunity for the Department to award unclaimed special elk hunting licenses to alternates that are drawn during the initial process. Prohibiting the transfer of a special elk hunting license, awarded through the random drawing license program, is intended to promote and ensure the

equitability of the drawing and prevent the potential commercialization of elk in Virginia, which is a guiding principle of the North American Model of Wildlife Management. The proposal that a drawn applicant with a recent and frequent history of wildlife violations may be rejected, will ensure that the limited opportunities that are available to hunt elk within the EMZ are not afforded to those that may not pursue them in a legal and ethical manner.